

# ATTENTION COKE LOVERS

## FREE ★ BASE



\$3.95



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EVERYTHING YOU'LL EVER  
NEED TO KNOW  
ABOUT

# FREEBASE COCAINE

THE  
GREATEST  
THING SINCE SEX.

by  
J. M. ANVIL

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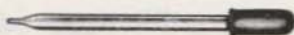
## **To Lew and Irv**

Special thanks to Bill and Skip

Cover Art: L. P. & Laura

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## INTRODUCTION

"The best, eh? Shit, that's what everybody says. I been smokin' base all over the country for years now and everybody's got *the* best. Come on, lemme try some of your shit anyway."

Oh boy, I thought as I loaded the pipe and lit the torch, I hope this big mother likes it. I mean, I have confidence in my product—I told him this was gonna be the best free-base he'd ever tried—but goddam he was big and so was his buddy and I sure wanted them to stay happy. Both were first-string NFL football linemen and either one of them made two of me. So, considering he was in much better condition than I and had far more lung capacity, I put a pinch more on the pipe than I usually do for myself.

He stood up—more lung expansion when you're standing. I started to tell him not to draw too hard on the pipe but was abruptly cut off:

"Come on, man, I know how to smoke the shit. Just give me a good torch job and don't burn the moustache!"

With the propane flame perfectly adjusted I began heating the glass bowl until I saw the white crystals on the screen liquefy. Gently from above then I teased the melted cocaine and dense white smoke began filling the pipe's chamber while he steadily drew in. Thick white smoke continued as he drew and drew and drew. For thirty seconds he drew. I was thinking this man must have bionic lungs when at last the smoke ended and I cut off the torch.

He stood there in the center of the room, towering, holding his precious breath. All eyes were upon him. Soon a smile crept over his bearded face but not the slightest exhale had escaped. A few seconds later his eyes widened and we could tell he was appreciating the high. Some chuckles were heard. Still no exhale though he'd been holding it for close to a minute. All of a sudden he fell to his knees, fighting to hold his wind even longer. From his expression it was certain that he was really getting off; in his antics he fell flat on the floor, rolled over onto his back and kicked his legs in the air. Then he exhaled and lay still. The room was silent.

"Well?" I said. He sat up, smiling.

"Brother, I mean brother, that is the best goddam base I have ever had—bar none! Wow! I'm flying—and just one hit. You sho' that's base?"

"Sure I'm sure, man. It's base made right, that's all. Now you so sure you been smokin' base for a year?" We all laughed.

"I ain't never had no shit that good. Here, gimme another sample—"

Suddenly the others in the room piped up:

"Hey, fuck you, he gon' pass it over here first . . . Get to the end of the line motherfucker! You had yo' turn!"

Once again, I knew my confidence was well-founded. The Best. They'd be spoiled forever.

Getting to know the best freebase is both a blessing and a curse, but those who partake of it are indeed spoiled forever, as you, dear reader, soon shall be. Read on.

There are hundreds—nay, thousands—of "experts" on freebase. At this early stage of the game practically every user is a self-proclaimed "expert." Like my football player friend said, everybody's got *the best*. Yet the reality is that only a handful of people know what they're doing and how to make a truly good product. It's astounding that people actually smoke some of the shit around that's supposedly good base. Even the freebase kits on the market are painfully inadequate—certainly far below state-of-the-art. Things really haven't changed much since I was first turned on to base years ago; which is a shame as many people are turned off to what they think is good base, just like I was initially. Let me take you on a little

## FLASHBACK

"Freebase? What's that?"

"You've never heard of it?"

"No. What the hell is it?"

"Here, try some, all you do is—"

"Wait a minute, man, I like to know what I'm ingesting. Tell me what it is first."

"It's cocaine in a different form."

"Just cocaine? Nothing else?"



"That's right, pure cocaine, nothing else."

"Well why are we smoking it then? Let's have a snort."

"You can't snort this, man, it's not water-soluble. You gotta smoke it. Here take the pipe."

"Alright. Won't fuck me up will it?"

"No, no. Now look. I'll heat it for you with this torch. What you do is exhale first and then start drawing on the pipe, slow and steady. That's it. Now don't stop, keep going. Good, good. You've got it—now hold your breath as long as you can."

Lungs full, I held my breath and waited. The smoke was surprisingly cool and easy to hold.

"You got a rush yet?" said my friend, attentively.

I shook my head, not ready to exhale. I wondered what I should feel. Then it hit me, but it wasn't at all what I'd been expecting.

"Uh . . . I don't know," I said, expelling a rather oddly metallic tasting breath. A slight queasiness in my stomach had developed.

"Sometimes it takes a couple of hits the first time," said my friend. "Here, try another."

What the hell, I thought, I'd sure like to get high. I'll try it again. "OK," I said, "give me a good hit."

"I'll give you a super hit this time," he replied.

Later that afternoon I left my friend's house with a decidedly negative opinion of freebase, to say the least. Any high that I'd experienced had been completely overshadowed by the intense nausea I felt after the second and third tokes. For a while I was so close to vomiting that to control the urge I had to sit and do breathing exercises. My friend had shrugged it off with the comment that "a lot of people get sick the first time they try it," but that was no answer for me. Shit, if you want to you can accustom yourself to regular doses of strychnine—but who needs it? Just before I left I made him give me two fat lines of regular coke so I'd be straight, and I felt much better for it. How could anything be better than regular old coke?

Well, following *that* introduction to freebase I didn't have the slightest desire to repeat the experience, not for several months anyhow, mainly because I was prejudiced and

neither knew nor met anyone who seemed knowledgeable enough to change my opinion. Also, there weren't many opportunities anyway, it was such a new thing. But the few chances I had I turned down, remembering that awful nausea. When I finally was persuaded to try freebase again it was only after hearing these convincingly-spoken words: "Man, this won't make you sick. This base is made right—it's not the usual garbage. Once you smoke this you'll never want to snort coke again!" This formidable challenge, one I could hardly refuse—especially as it came from this particular person—now leads us into our next chapter, where we'll begin learning about freebase at its best.

## I MEET THE "FIRST BASEMAN"

Just to give our story a little more background, let me preface this chapter by telling you that I happen to have the good fortune of having some excellent connections in the entertainment industry, particularly around Hollywood. This is where, amongst the actors and actresses, producers, rock stars, and all other kinds of high-rollers, that the freebase phenomenon years ago got its start in this country. And it was here one evening at a wild party high in the Hollywood Hills that a very good producer friend of mine called me aside into his private office, saying "come with me, there's someone I'd like you to meet."

Inside the richly-furnished room, away from the noise of the party, a distinguished middle-aged gentleman was waiting. From a crystal decanter behind his desk my friend the producer poured us each a snifter of cognac. Then he addressed me:

"J.M.," he said, "I'd like you to meet Professor P."

"Pleased to meet you," I said to the older man, wondering what all this was about.

"Professor, J.M. is one of my oldest and dearest friends."

"Good," said P., "you understand my need for discretion."

"J.M.," continued my friend, "the Professor and I would like to have your assurance that what we're about to discuss will remain absolutely confidential. I have a proposition



for you, but whether or not you accept you must agree to keep the matter entirely to yourself."

Now my interest was really perked. "Of course," I said, "go ahead."

"Good. I'll be brief. As you know, I'll be leaving in the next few days along with the cast and crew of the film I'm working on. We'll be going to location in New Mexico for about 2 or 3 weeks. I'd like you to come along, as my guest, of course."

Why not, I thought. "But what can I do for you," I asked, "and where does the Professor fit in?"

My friend swirled his brandy, glanced at the Professor, and went on, "Well, first let me explain one of the technicalities of the movie business, then you'll understand. The people involved—cast and crew—are very good at what they do. They work very hard, and naturally they party very hard, too. And, some of them are prima donnas. I'm like the lord overseer, and one of the things I've got to do is keep them all happy, and that's getting more difficult all the time."

"Quite," said P., laughing.

"Anyway, it used to be that a few ounces of cocaine on the set kept everyone happy, but not so anymore. Now they all want freebase, and they're like spoiled children if they don't get it."

"Freebase?" I said, incredulous. "That shit? It makes me sick."

The Professor smiled, and my friend went on:

"Obviously then you've never had good freebase. That's where the Professor fits in: he's a chemist and teaches at the University, and he makes the best base in the world. In fact, he's the man who started it, turned us all on. Professor, let's turn this man on—besides, I could use a hit myself." He opened a drawer, produced a pipe, and loaded it with beautiful white crystals from a silver snuff box. "Here, J.M., this won't make you sick. Be my guest."

Well, that was the time when I really got turned on to freebase. I had about three hits and was into one of the best highs—no, *the* best—I'd ever had. No nausea, just an indescribable euphoria. But back to the story:

"I'm convinced, I'm convinced," said I, the convert.

"I love it. Now I understand why your people want it. But what can I do?"

"You can help me keep them under control. You see, none of them know how to make it and I want to keep it that way. I provide it for them—that is, with the Professor's help. So they work hard for me and I can limit their intake. None of them know the Professor. You, J.M., will be going along as the chemist, after Professor P. teaches you the methods. That way I can still keep them happy and retain control. I can trust you."

"Why not have the Professor make up a supply in advance for you?" I asked.

"The problem is," said the Professor, now lighting a cigar, "that freebase is not particularly stable. In fact it loses its potency rather quickly after conversion. One must have a steady, fresh supply. And I'm afraid I am unable to make this journey."

"So what do you say, J.M.?" queried my friend. "Are you in?"

"Sure I am, man. I'm always ready for something new, and this is educational, too. Professor, I'm honored to be working with you."

The old man chuckled. "Excellent," he said. "So let's begin. I must be running along soon before my wife comes looking for me. Here, look this over while I get the equipment ready." He handed me a typewritten sheet:

## EQUIPMENT

For processing 1 gram cocaine hydrochloride  
into free base

Test tube, pyrex, screw-on cap  
Eyedropper, 6 to 8", for extraction (plastic  
OK)  
Eyedropper, 3 to 4", for chemicals (glass,  
precision)  
2-Medium (4 to 8") watch glass or evapor-  
ating dish  
Single-edge razor blades



## Optional Equipment

Gram scale  
Small funnel  
Amber glass bottles for storage of reagents  
Ph papers—range (approx.) 4-10 plus  
or minus .5

## Chemicals

Ammonium Hydroxide ( $\text{NH}_4\text{OH}$ ) solution  
Ethyl ether anhydrous  $[(\text{C}_2\text{H}_5)_2\text{O}]$

## Optional chemicals

Sodium Hydroxide ( $\text{NaOH}$ )  
Petroleum ether (Ligroine)

# FREEBASE EXPLAINED

“What exactly is freebase, Professor?” I asked.

“Simply speaking, freebase is cocaine that’s been separated from its acid radical. You see, what you’re accustomed to snorting is cocaine hydrochloride. The chemical formula for cocaine hydrochloride is  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{21}\text{NO}_4\text{HCl}$ . The hydrochloride ( $\text{HCl}$ ) portion of the molecule makes it water-soluble and acidic, with a normal Ph factor of around 4 to 4.5. In our process we will ‘free’ the cocaine from the hydrochloride in the molecule, resulting in ‘free base’, which is chemically represented as  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{21}\text{NO}_4$ . At the same time the cocaine loses its water-solubility and its acidity. Ideally, freebase will have a fairly neutral Ph, about 7, and a melting point of approximately  $94-98^\circ\text{C}$ , versus nearly  $100^\circ\text{C}$  higher for cocaine hydrochloride.”

“What are the advantages?”

“Well, primarily in the mode of ingestion. Since freebase isn’t water-soluble it must be smoked. The cocaine is much more readily absorbed through the lungs than through the nasal membrane. A small quantity is much more effective

in smoking than in snorting. Furthermore, because freebase is neutral in Ph it doesn't alter your body chemistry like hydrochloride."

"What do you mean?"

"A simple example will illustrate. Haven't you ever noticed that the razor blades you use to chop your cocaine soon corrode and rust?"

"Yeah, I have."

"Consider that they are stainless steel, young man. The acid in your cocaine eats into stainless steel. Imagine what repeated use does to your body. Not only does it ruin your nose but it acidifies the blood. Freebase eliminates these noxious effects, as well as most of the common 'cuts' found in street cocaine." The Professor had assembled a small group of equipment on the desk before him. "Well," he continued, "we're about ready. Before we begin take a look at these instructions." He passed me another typewritten sheet:

## PROCESS

Work area should be free of all flame, including pilot lights. Extinguish all cigarettes.

1. Weigh 1 gram cocaine hydrochloride and pulverize.
2. Using funnel to prevent spillage, pour cocaine into clean test tube containing 1-1½" clean, room-temperature water, preferably distilled.
3. Cap tube and shake for approximately 1 minute or until dissolved. (Residue after 2 minutes is "cut")
4. Using glass eyedropper add 4-5 drops ammonium hydroxide. Swirl to mix. Dense white cloudy precipitate will form immediately.
5. Using funnel or clean, dry eyedropper, add ½ to ¾" ethyl ether (anhydrous). Cap tube securely and shake vigorously for 1-2 minutes.



6. Place test tube upright. Allow liquids to settle for 1-2 minutes. Separation will occur.
7. When bubbling reaction stops, uncap tube. Using clean, dry eyedropper or pipette, draw off most of top liquid and transfer to clean watch glass or evaporating dish. Set aside. Ether will evaporate within 5 minutes, leaving freebase. When dry, use razor blade to scrape off plate. Smoke and enjoy. (Be sure to save liquid remaining in test tube.)

"Well this seems pretty simple," I commented.

"Yes," said the Professor, "just the 'basics,' you might say. Ha, ha. But now we're ready to begin here with a live demonstration during which I'll give you some more detail. Pay careful attention and we'll go through it step-by-step."

"Look," said my producer friend, "I'm going back to the party before I'm missed. But let me have another hit before I go. J.M., watch closely, the Professor's a good teacher."

"OK. Professor, you just go ahead and I'll try not to interrupt. But give me another hit first, too."

## MORE DETAILS

"First," he began, "make sure your working area is free of all flame. The ether you're using is highly flammable, and it's best if your area is well-ventilated, although you must be careful that any neighbors you may have don't smell the fumes. The smell of ether carries a great distance and it's a dead give-away. Like a hospital. Now, please extinguish your cigarette.

"Next we take one gram of cocaine hydrochloride, such as this, and break it up to remove any rocks so that it will dissolve readily, saving time. Always weigh the amount you're using so you can adjust the formula accordingly. Now, as you can see, I have placed about an inch of water in this test tube, into which we now add our cocaine. If you use a small funnel like this there'll be no spillage. Cap

the tube and shake until dissolved. Good coke like this will dissolve rapidly leaving no residue. See? But if there is anything left after a minute or two don't worry about it. It's cut, and it'll be separated in the next few steps.

"Next you add the alkali, which in this case is ammonium hydroxide ( $\text{NH}_4\text{OH}$ ). If you're using a laboratory grade solution it will be quite strong—about 27%—so strong it'll knock your head off if you get a good whiff, so be sure not to breathe the fumes and don't get it on your skin. Use a glass eyedropper to dispense it. With the undiluted 27% solution you should start with 4-5 drops per gram of cocaine. Carefully drop it directly into the tube containing your dissolved cocaine. An immediate reaction will occur turning the solution white; cap your tube and swirl to mix it. If the solution remains clear at the bottom after swirling, add another 1-2 drops ammonium hydroxide—no more—cap, and swirl again until the entire solution is cloudy.

"This is perhaps the most critical stage of the process, the adding of the alkali. Care must be taken not to over-alkalify the solution by adding too much ammonium hydroxide. Unfortunately, adding too much ammonia is the most common error people make in this process. This results in a too-alkaline product which has a foul metallic taste and often makes you sick when you smoke it."

"So that's what made me sick," I remarked.

"Probably so. Too much ammonia. Gradually one becomes accustomed to it but continued use of over-alkalified freebase can lead to a condition known as alkalosis, an increased alkalinity of body fluids. We'll come back to our discussion of alkalis later, but for the moment let's go on with our process.

"Now, using a clean, dry funnel or eyedropper, put into your test tube about  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$ " of ether, if you are using the ethyl anhydrous variety. Cap the tube tightly and shake well for a minute or two. The freebase is readily dissolved into the ether, although it is no longer water-soluble. Let the tube settle for a while, until no reaction is visible, then uncap the tube slowly.

"Using your ether eyedropper—by the way, always keep your eyedroppers separate, one for alkali, one for ether—draw off most of the ether, which will be the top liquid



in the tube, and transfer it to a clean, dry watch glass or evaporating dish. Save the remaining liquid in the test tube. After the ether evaporates from the watch glass your freebase will be left. When it is thoroughly dry use a razor blade to scrape it off and it is ready for use. Ethyl ether will evaporate usually within five minutes, a little more rapidly than petroleum ether. I shall discuss several other differing characteristics of the two types of ether later, but now we are ready to perform our second extraction on the liquid remaining in the test tube so we shall go on:

"To the remaining liquid in your test tube carefully add 1 drop ammonium hydroxide and swirl. If the solution shows a strong reaction by turning dense white, as it did the first time, add 1 more drop ammonium hydroxide, cap, and mix well. Now repeat the extraction process with the ether. Usually all the freebase will be liberated after 2 or 3 extractions using ethyl ether. Each time after you have pulled off your ether add one drop ammonium hydroxide to the liquid left in the tube. As long as you see a cloudy reaction there's still some freebase in the solution, so add some more ether, shake well, and pull off to an evaporating dish. When finally a drop of ammonium hydroxide to the test tube causes no more reaction the process is complete and the solution is free of cocaine and may be discarded.

"If possible it's best to use a separate watch glass for each extraction. This way you can observe how much freebase is being liberated each time, and with a little experience you'll know when you've got it all out by judging from your last yield. Yield of material on the plates will of course diminish progressively.

"Speaking of yield, from uncut, pure South American cocaine you can expect a return of about 85-90% of the original weight. In other words, beginning with one gram of cocaine hydrochloride we will have a yield in freebase of .85-.90 gram; if our cocaine was pure. There is a loss of approximately 10-15% in weight when the acid radical (the hydrochloride) is freed from the cocaine. Keeping in mind this normal loss in weight the freebase process can be used as a rapid and fairly reliable method of determining the purity of one's cocaine, if one is more concerned with the percentage of cocaine than with the identification of adult-

erants (cuts). For example, if one were to get a yeild of  $\frac{1}{2}$  gram freebase from 1 gram cocaine hydrochloride then one could reasonably assume that there was an approximate 40% cut on the original sample.

"Well, I think that about covers it. Let's see, is there anything I've left out?"

"You said you'd come back to some details on ether, and the alkalis."

"Ah, yes. Certainly. Before I forget let me tell you something about your ammonium hydroxide. If you are using the laboratory grade solution it may be wise to dilute it 50% before using in order to reduce the risk of over-alkalifying your solution while you are still a beginner at this process. You might find this suggestion particularly helpful during the second and third extractions, when it is quite easy to add a bit too much. Also I might add that in a pinch one can use plain old household ammonia in place of laboratory grade ammonium hydroxide. Household ammonia is really the same thing, only diluted quite a bit. I prefer the reagent grade chemicals, of course, but not everyone can obtain them easily. If one must use household ammonia, however, it's necessary to increase the amount about 5 times over the lab grade ammonium hydroxide, that is, 5 drops to 1. And be certain to use plain ammonia, with no additives such as detergents or fragrances.

"Sodium hydroxide (NaOH), commonly known as lye, may also be used as an effective alkali in this process. To make a suitable solution, add 100 grams sodium hydroxide crystals or sticks to 8 fluid ounces of water. When using sodium hydroxide follow the same instructions and be sure to avoid skin contact as it is highly caustic.

"Now concerning the ether: as far as I am concerned there is no substitute for ether in this process, although it can be done using other solvents or none at all, for that matter—but I don't recommend those methods and shall not elaborate on them for that reason. Ether is pure and clean and leaves virtually no residue. Out of roughly 100 types of ether there are only two types I will recommend: ethyl anhydrous, and petroleum. Either variety is excellent for making freebase but there are some differences. Ethyl ether is about twice as costly as petroleum ether although neither



is prohibitively expensive. Actually it works out about the same cost-wise since one uses far less of the more expensive ethyl variety than the petroleum.

"Ethyl ether requires careful handling and storage. After opening it should be kept refrigerated in the original container or in well-sealed amber glass bottles. During use one should not leave the bottle open any longer than necessary and care must be taken so as not to introduce any water or foreign materials into the ether, which is why we always use the same eyedropper for our ether.

"Thus far in describing the freebase process we have assumed the use of ethyl ether as the solvent. Now let me say a few words about the alternative, petroleum ether (ligroine), which is equally acceptable. Petroleum ether is less volatile than ethyl and doesn't require the special handling, but the use of it does require some modification to our freebase process. Petroleum ether doesn't absorb the freebase from solution as readily as does the ethyl, therefore it's necessary to increase both the amount of ether used and the number of extractions performed when using it. As a general rule one should triple the amount of ether when using petroleum, i.e., put 1½ to 2" of petroleum ether in your test tube after adding the hydroxide to your cocaine solution. Shake for 3-5 minutes before pulling off the ether. The appearance of the precipitate will be quite different in the test tube when using petroleum ether than with ethyl, with numerous white chunks apparent. As many as five extractions may be necessary to liberate all the freebase when using petroleum ether. In addition, you'll notice a much different crystal structure of the freebase on your watch glass when using petrol ether. As the ether evaporates the freebase will grow into a dense forest of small 'trees' several centimeters high, quite lovely in appearance, resembling miniature coral or lichen. These little 'trees' are extremely light and delicate, fluffy, you might say. The fluffiness of the freebase crystals obtained when using petroleum ether makes the yield appear considerably greater than when using ethyl ether, but in fact, weight-wise the yield will be the same regardless of which type of ether is used. Incidentally, these 'trees' will only appear on a spotlessly clean watch glass; if you are using a glass that hasn't been

thoroughly scraped and cleaned from a previous extraction the freebase will deposit itself as a thick uniform coating. In either case when petroleum ether freebase is completely dry it is so light that it sometimes literally flies off the plate during scraping, so it's a good idea to scrape it while it's still very slightly wet and then let it dry in a pile."

"Professor, can you mix the two types of ether?"

"Absolutely not. Your extraction must be made with one or the other. However, you may want to experiment with combinations of freebase. Try smoking a 50/50 mixture of ethyl-made and petroleum-made freebase. I think you'll find it noticeably more potent than either variety alone."

"What kinds of things can go wrong with the process, Professor?"

"Precious little. I've already cautioned you about over-alkalifying the solution, the most common mistake. While you're still a beginner it may be helpful to use Ph papers to judge the acidity or alkalinity of the solution. Using Ph paper you'll notice that the dissolved cocaine solution, before adding hydroxide, is about 4-5, quite acid. Following the first extraction, before adding additional hydroxide, the Ph will have moved closer to 7. Try not to allow the Ph to exceed 8. Should you make an error and over-alkalify the solution, this may be corrected by adding a little more cocaine hydrochloride. Remember, the best freebase comes from a solution having a fairly neutral Ph (7). With or without the Ph papers, however, you should obtain an excellent product if you simply follow my instructions.

"Of course, with the tremendous variety of cocaine found on the street, it's impossible for me to anticipate every reaction you may encounter. There are so many different types of adulterants found in illicit coke. All I can tell you is that the freebase process will extract all of the cocaine and at the same time eliminate most of the usual cuts, such as mannitol (mannite), inositol, lactose, etc. If you are using high-quality cocaine to begin with this process is virtually fool-proof, and will yield an exceptionally fine product.

"Another common error beginners are apt to make is accidentally drawing off some of the water/hydroxide liquid along with the ether during extraction. When trans-



ferred to the watch glass this becomes evident as small water droplets are seen interspersed among the drying freebase. To correct this problem wait until most of the ether has evaporated and then, using a piece of tissue paper, gently blot the water droplets away.

"Occasionally, when using ethyl ether, one will find a gummy deposit left on the watch glass after the ether has evaporated. This usually results from excess humidity in the air. To correct this situation simply mix the residue with the flat edge of a razor blade (or spoon), using circular strokes on the watch glass. After thorough mixing the residue will dry completely and one may then scrape it up and smoke it."

"What about storage?"

"Well, freebase is less stable than cocaine hydrochloride and begins to lose its potency relatively soon after conversion. I doubt you'll ever have to worry about storage, because you'll probably use it as fast as you can make it. But should you have some left-overs, seal it in an air-tight container and put it in the freezer. It'll be good for several weeks at the least."

Suddenly the door opened and my producer friend entered the room. "Hey, how's it going with you two?" he asked. "Got a hit of base for me?"

The Professor stood up and began packing his case. "Your friend J.M. seems to be an excellent student. I think he's got it all down now. I'm just departing, but I'll leave these several fresh plates of base for you. Why don't you give J.M. some lessons in smoking techniques?"

"Good idea," I said.

"I can see you're already becoming as bad as the others," said my friend, only half in jest. "I wonder if I'll really be able to trust you."

"Oh come on," I protested, "what'd you mean—"

"He's right J.M.," said Professor P. "And he should know—he's had plenty of experience. Your freebase lessons wouldn't be complete without a warning of the potential for its abuse. But I'll leave that to our mutual friend here, as I must be on my way. Goodnight, gentlemen . . ."

"Goodnight, Professor, thanks so much for your help."

"Au revoir, Professor, see you when I get back."

## SMOKING TECHNIQUE

"Well, let's break out the pipe, J.M.," said my friend, after showing the Professor out, "and I'll give you your final lessons. First of all let me explain about the pipe: It should be a glass (Pyrex preferred) water pipe having 125-250 ml capacity, with a Pyrex bowl. I prefer a bowl that has a straight stem and is removable from the pipe for cleaning. You can make your own using an erlenmeyer or distilling flask, a small Pyrex funnel, and a rubber stopper; or, you can buy something like Toker II or Snow Toker at your local head shop. In the bowl you should place 3-8 extra-fine screens, stainless steel if possible. By the way, always burn your new screens before using to eliminate toxic residue fumes.

"Now, to vaporize the freebase on the pipe I recommend using a propane torch. Propane torches—found in hardware stores—burn very clean and are adjustable to a very precise flame. Just about everything else—butane, matches, lighters—leaves a dirty carbon residue and is hard to regulate when using.

"OK, after you've loaded the pipe—you don't need much, just a good pinch—set your propane on a medium-low flame and apply the heat underneath the bowl until you see the crystals begin melting. Then start drawing on the pipe, slow and steady, not too hard or you'll suck the melted freebase down into the water before combustion. Keep the heat on and continue drawing and the smoke will begin coming. Keep drawing until all the smoke is finished, then hold your breath as long as you can. You can even expel your breath into a balloon and re-inhale it so as not to waste any smoke. I call it 'recycling energy!' Be sure to let the pipe cool before loading it again, else the freebase will melt immediately on the hot screens.

"One thing that's very important is to keep a steady draw going on the pipe while the heat is being applied. If you stop drawing before the base is all vaporized remove the flame prior to stopping or the base may ignite into flame, which will produce a bad carbon taste, ruining the toke. If you want to speed the vaporization you can tease the melted base on the screen from above with the propane



torch, just make sure you don't set it afire. A small hint of blue flame off the base is fine, but don't let it flame up orange-yellow—it tastes terrible!

"Here's a toke for you, J.M."

"Bout time," I laughed, "I was wondering when you were gonna pass it over here."

"Getting pretty fond of the stuff, aren't you?" inquired my friend.

"I must admit that the Professor's freebase is dynamite," I said as I put the pipe to my mouth. "But what're you trying to say, and what's the warning you and the Professor were talking about? I hope you're not gonna lay any bullshit on me about how dangerous it is or something—you know I've been using coke for 15 years now."

"Well, anything can be dangerous when taken in excess, you know, even water. But I'm not trying to say that freebase is dangerous, *per se*. In fact, I would say that properly made, freebase is considerably less harmful, physically, than regular cocaine, in *any* quantity. I say this from a great deal of experience with both. Hell, I've smoked as much as 7 grams in a single night, and I've used 3-4 grams daily for weeks at a time without any side-effects more serious than weight loss and lack of sleep. All I'm trying to convey to you is that freebase is a lot more seductive than regular coke, if you can believe that, and people will show a tendency to use more of it than they stop to realize—as long as it's available.

"Remember, J.M., I'm taking you along on this trip—and I had the Professor teach you the freebase process—for one reason: control of my movie people. I won't have time to worry about the freebase supply, so you're going to be the quartermaster. And the bottleneck. I want you to limit everyone, including yourself, to one gram of freebase per day."

"Including you?" I asked.

"Myself included. I don't need any more than a gram a day. Now you're going to need a lot of discipline to enforce this mandate—self-discipline, that is—because the guys are going to try conning you, the girls will use all their wiles on you, and you're gonna want more than a gram a day for yourself; but you can't give in to anybody, or it'll throw

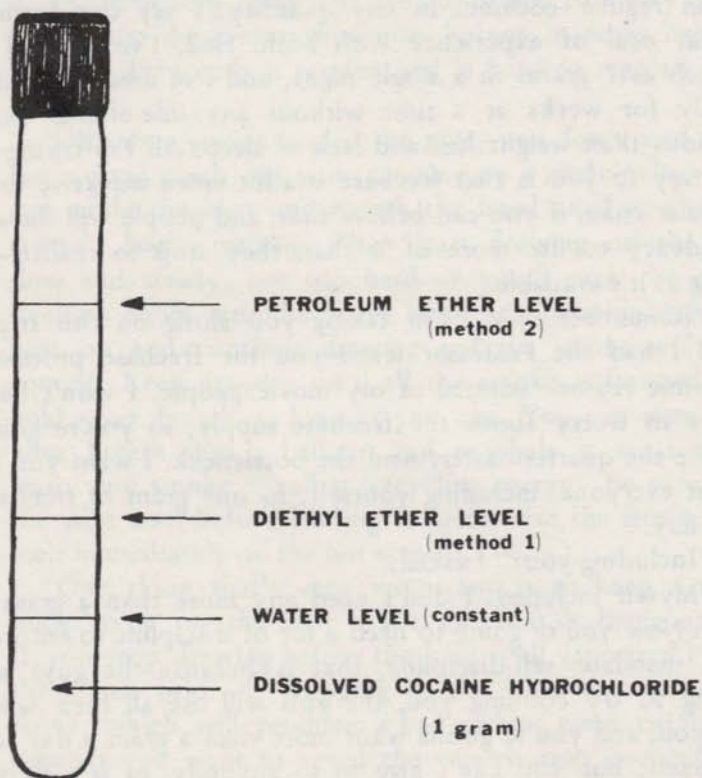
the whole camp into disarray. Do you think you can do it?"

"Sure I can," I answered with perfect confidence. "By the way, one more thing: where do you obtain your chemicals?"

"Nevermind. You don't worry about that, I'll give them to you. Now let's have one more hit apiece and call it a night."

fig. 1

**STANDARD SIZE TEST TUBE**





## EPILOGUE

New Mexico. On location with cast and crew of a major motion picture production. I was busy day and night in my makeshift laboratory producing freebase for everybody. I don't think there was a single one among them who wasn't into it. I've never seen so many propane torches in one place in all my life. The local hardware store people couldn't figure out what we needed with all the propane refills we bought—their entire stock was gone in two days! The movie went right along on schedule, but I swear I don't know how they did it—everyone was always high. Mine, however, was probably the hardest job of all—limiting all those crazies each to a gram a day. It was tough, I tell you, being both chemist *and* bookkeeper. Everybody was out for more: the guys tried conning me, the girls tried hustling me, all of them lied; but I kept my promise—one gram a day, period. That is, until the third day when I accidentally walked in on my producer friend and the leading lady in a storage room and saw them smoking base from a bag as big as a grapefruit. So that's why he could get along on a gram a day—he had his own stash! That night I made up over a half-pound and that movie camp went on a freebase binge that shut down the production for days. Later I tried explaining to my producer friend that it hadn't been out of spite. Freebase had simply got the best of me, like it had got him and all the rest of us. I lost my job, anyway. But that was alright—I have no regrets—I'd learned a lot, not the least of which was don't work for your friends. And keep your own stash.

And, P.S. I learned where to get the chemicals: Lab supply houses, or, where else? just about any drug store.

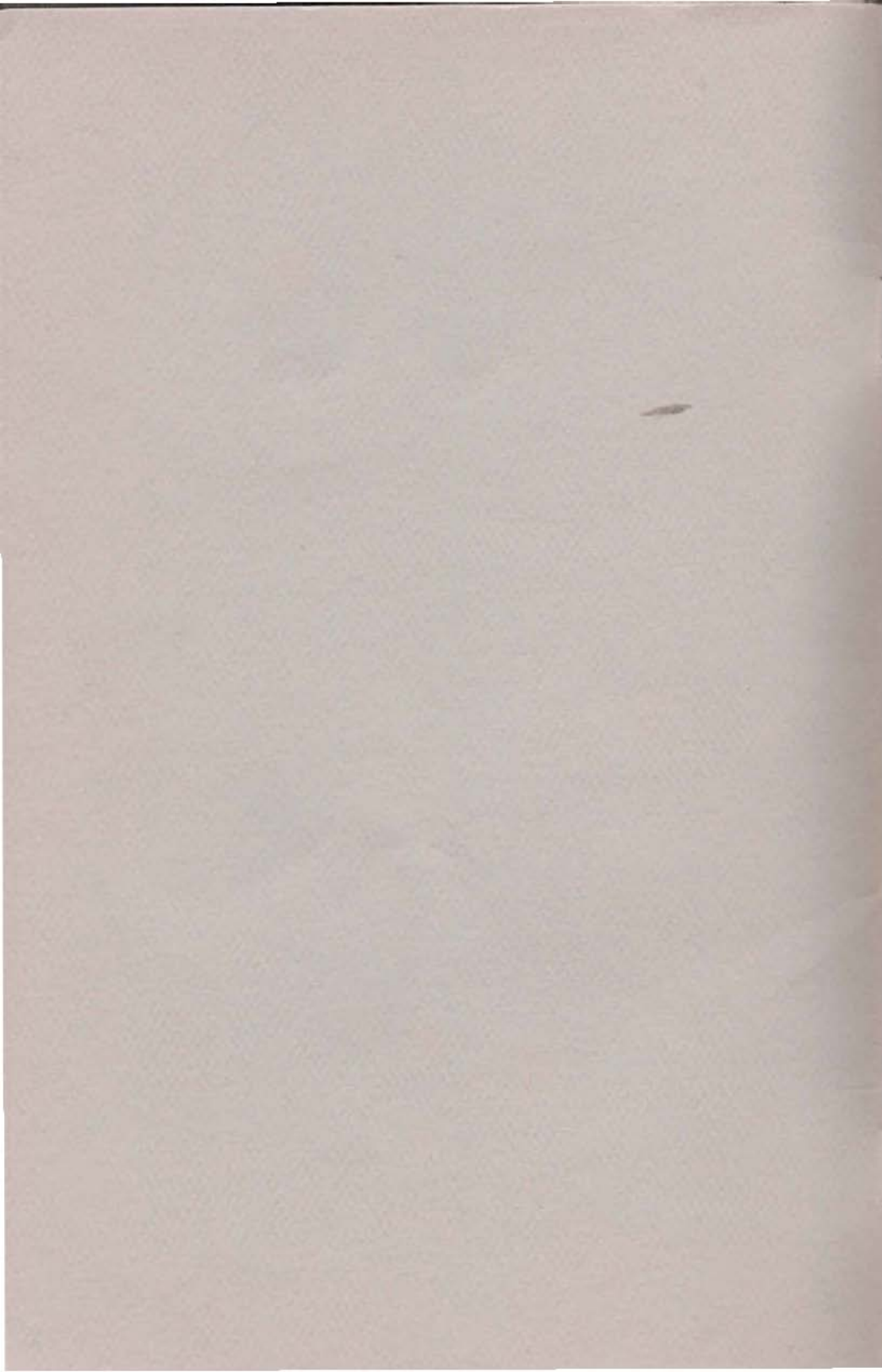
## APPENDIX

### Melting Points\*

Centigrade°

Procaine (free base)	60
Lidocaine (free base)	66-68
Lidocaine HCl	76-79
Benzocaine	90-92
Cocaine (free base)	96-98
Butacaine sulfate	100-103
Tetracaine HCl	147-150
Procaine HCl	153-156
Mannitol (mannite)	165-168
Methedrine	171-175
Sucrose	185-186
Cocaine HCl (pure South American)	187-189
Cocaine HCl (pharmaceutical)	195-197
Lactose	201-203
Inositol	224-227
Caffeine	235-238
Yohimbine HCl	300-302

\*Melting points given are for pure substances; mixtures may alter exact points.







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